

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 EB-07 NRC-05 OES-07
FEAE-00 ERDA-05 /109 W
-----091625Z 096291 /43

P R 091451Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8106
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 07957

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, GW
SUBJECT: GERMAN MEDIA REACTION TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S
MEETING WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE GERMAN MEDIA HAS TAKEN A POSITIVE
TONE IN REPORTING THE BILATERAL MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT
CARTER AND CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT IN LONDON, MAY 8. IN
CONTRAST TO PRE-SUMMIT ARTICLES, SOME OF WHICH PREDICTED
A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE U.S. PRESIDENT AND THE GERMAN
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CHANCELLOR, PRESS AND TV COVERAGE STRESS THAT ALTHOUGH NO
SOLUTIONS WERE FOUND FOR SOME OF THE EXISTING BILATERAL
PROBLEMS (E.G., FRG-BRAZIL NUCLEAR AGREEMENT), THE TWO
STATESMEN AGREED ON BASIC ISSUES. IN SUM, THE IMPRESSION
THE GERMAN PUBLIC HAS GOTTEN OF THE MEETING IS THAT THE
PRESIDENT AND THE CHANCELLOR TOOK EACH OTHER'S MEASURE,
WERE IMPRESSED, AND ARE PREPARED TO SEEK COMMON SOLUTIONS

TO GLOBAL PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

1. BEFORE THE MEETING OF CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND PRESIDENT CARTER ON MAY 7 SOME QUARTERS IN THE GERMAN MEDIA WERE PREDICTING AN ALL OUT GERMAN-AMERICAN CONFRONTATION. THE FOCUS OF MOST MEDIA COVERAGE WAS ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS AND FEW JOURNALISTS DISCUSSED THE HEALTHY FOUNDATION OF GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS. IN CONTRAST, POST-MEETING REPORTING HAS BEEN VERY UP-BEAT AND AS THE "SEUDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG" PUT IT: ALTHOUGH THE TWO WORLD LEADERS HAVE NOT YET BECOME FRIENDS, THEY ARE NO LONGER OPPONENTS.

2. CONSIDERABLE COVERAGE IN THE PRESS HAS FOCUSED ON ATMOSPHERICS AND THE FACT THAT ALL SIDES DESCRIBED THE MEETING AS FRIENDLY AND OPEN. BEFORE THE LONDON SUMMIT THE MEDIA NOT ONLY CONCENTRATED ON RECENT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ON POLICY ISSUES BUT PLAYED UP WHAT THEY CLAIMED WERE POOR PERSONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CHANCELLOR AND THE PRESIDENT. NOW THEY REPORT THAT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND PRESIDENT CARTER WERE COMFORTABLE WITH EACH OTHER AT THE MEETING AND THAT BOTH STATESMEN CAME AWAY IMPRESSED FROM THEIR FIRST FACE-TO-FACE ENCOUNTER SINCE THE PRESIDENT TOOK OFFICE.

3. ALL THE COMMENTATORS HERE RECOGNIZE THAT ONE MEETING WOULD NOT SOLVE SUCH THORNY PROBLEMS AS NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, BUT THE POSITIVE TONE OF THE LONDON BILATERAL HAS CAUSED MANY OF THEM TO REFOCUS THEIR ATTENTION ON THE CONFIDENTIAL

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BIGGER AND MORE IMPORTANT ISSUE OF THE CENTRAL NEED FOR GOOD GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS WITHIN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. GERMAN OFFICIALS WERE BUSY BEFORE THE MEETING PUTTING OUT THE LINE THAT THEY EXPECTED IT TO GO WELL.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 07957

THEY HAVE EVERY REASON TO BE SATISFIED WITH THE WAY THE
MEDIA HAVE HANDLED THE MEETING SO FAR, AND THAT THE
IMPRESSION THE GERMAN PUBLIC HAS OF THE MEETING IS
POSITIVE.

4. RECENT DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC HAVE NOT BEEN VERY KIND TO HELMUT
SCHMIDT. THE LONDON MEETING, PORTRAYED IN THE GERMAN
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MEDIA AS A SUCCESS, IS LIKELY TO GIVE HIS POLITICAL
STOCK A BOOST AT HOME. ONE OF THE LEADING OPPOSITION
POLITICIANS, KURT BIEDENKOPF, CONFIRMED THIS VIEW AND TOLD
US THAT THE SUMMIT WAS A PLUS FOR GERMAN-AMERICAN RE-
LATIONS AND FOR THE SCHMIDT-GENSCHER GOVERNMENT.
BIEDENKOPF TOOK ISSUE WITH A RECENT STATEMENT BY CDU/CSU
OPPOSITION CHAIRMAN KOHL THAT THE WEST GERMAN GOVERNMENT
HAD LOST CONTROL OVER FOREIGN POLICY. RATHER, BIEDENKOPF
SAID, SCHMIDT'S HANDLING OF HIS MEETING WITH THE PRESI-
DENT WILL STRENGTHEN THE CHANCELLOR'S HAND IN DEALING
WITH THE OPPOSITION AND IT MADE NO SENSE FOR THE OPPOSI-
TION TO TRY AND MAKE CAPITAL OUT OF US-WEST GERMAN

DIFFERENCES.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC ATTITUDES, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS, NUCLEAR FUELS, EXPORT LICENSES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BONN07957
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770162-1029
Format: TEL
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770580/aaaacrca.tel
Line Count: 173
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 20914698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2603624
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GERMAN MEDIA REACTION TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S MEETING WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT BEGIN SUMMARY: THE GERMAN MEDIA HAS TAKEN A POSIT
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, GE, (CARTER, JIMMY), (SCHMIDT, HELMUT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/20914698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009